



Alexander Graham Bell

Controversy

Alexander Graham Bell was not the only person working on the telephone during the 1870s. Several scientists claimed that they had actually invented the first telephone, not Bell.

Bell had filed a patent for his telephone in February 1876. A patent is a document that gives an inventor the right to prevent other inventors from making, using or selling the same invention without asking.

On the same day, a scientist called Elisha Grey had filed a patent caveat. This was not a full patent, but was a document to show that he would soon be filing a full patent.

Later, Elisha Grey felt that Alexander Graham Bell had stolen his ideas and used them to get his telephone working. This had to be investigated by the patents office.

Bell's claim to be the first inventor of the telephone was eventually approved in March 1876, and Grey abandoned his claim and his caveat.

Bell had to continue defending his idea from other scientists who claimed they had thought of it first. Over eighteen years, the Bell Telephone Company faced over 550 patent challenges. None were successful and Alexander Graham Bell is still regarded as the inventor of the first successful telephone.

